(prepared for Dulles-Eisenhower-Churchill mtg. 1/7/53)

S/P 222 PW R FR Eccles

NEA:ABDaspit:cms
12/31/52

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SECRET UNCLASSIFIED EO 12356

MEMO

DECLASSIFICATION DATE 6/25/78
PER NOTES OFFICE NEA
720115

1952 DEC 31 PM 12

OFFICE OF DIRECTOR

The United States together with the United Kingdom, France, Turkey, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, has agreed in principle to promote the establishment of a Middle East Defense Organization. Through diplomatic channels substantial agreement has been worked out among the seven sponsoring powers as to the form and character of the proposed organization. It is contemplated that membership will include the Arab States and Pakistan, and ultimately, if possible, Iran and Israel. Israel is now strongly opposed to the establishment of the Organization, since it will obviously involve the supply of military equipment to the Arab States. In spite of the Israel position and the possible dangers of Arab-Israel friction which have been carefully considered, the Department is convinced that the benefits the Organization promises are such as to require our proceeding with its establishment.

The Organization proposed will not be based on a treaty and at least in its initial phase will involve no formal commitments. Its principal task will be to plan for the defense of the Middle East.

It is hoped that the MEDO will provide a framework within which the Middle East States can be brought to cooperate with the Western powers in the field of military planning and through which they can be made to understand the nature of the Soviet threat to the area and the requirements for defending against it. Within this framework, it should prove more feasible to retain for the West the bases and military rights now held by Western powers in the area and to secure those additional facilities necessary to construct an effective area defense. The Organization is expected to assist in channeling military equipment to several states of the area and in developing indigenous forces.

Success in these operations may make it possible ultimately to evolve an effective Command structure able to assume responsibility for area defense.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY TWOOD JR 6/11/82
EO 12356 SEC 3.4(b)(1)
TS AUTH. ____ REASON(S) ____
DECLASSIFIED X RELEASABLE X
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS ____

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